

This past week, I introduced legislation to ease the burden on individuals and families taking advantage of telework, by proposing an annual tax credit for qualified teleworking expenses.

More and more, folks have acquired equipment and upgraded technology to create a work environment in their homes, and the expenses can add up quickly. With all of the benefits of telework, I believe it's important to make it easier for working individuals to benefit from the flexibilities of today's technologies.

It was national Telework Week, February 14-18, 2011, a nationwide effort to encourage agencies, organizations, and individuals to telework. A member of my staff also participated in teleworking this week. Telework can increase worker productivity and reduce traffic congestion by getting cars off the road. A study by the National Science Foundation found that teleworking increased productivity by 87%, and the U.S. Census Bureau reported that 73% of teleworkers felt they accomplished more work on telework days than when they were in the office. Additionally, telework can provide for continuity of operations in the case of a regional or national security issue, or inclement weather, such as the recent "thundersnow" storm. I joined with many of you in a long, tedious 7-hour commute from Washington, DC, back to Montross. Telework is not the only solution to these issues, but provides an element of flexibility when it's needed most, especially in the cases where safety is top priority.

Also in Washington this week, we heard from Defense Department (DoD) Secretary Robert Gates, as well as the Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Admiral Michael Mullen. They testified in front of the committee on the coming year's defense budget. The defense budget holds many implications for the First District, as we have many military installations as well as servicemembers living in the district. I have concerns about some of the recent decision-making at DoD, and will continue to monitor the provisions within the defense budget and other related legislation as it makes its way through Congress this spring. We must ensure we reduce waste, fraud and abuse, while also supporting our service men and women, and providing for the defense of this nation.

The top legislation in the House Chamber this week was the bill to fund the federal government for the remaining seven months of the fiscal year. I'll have more on that in my update next week. Stay tuned.

In the meantime, I hope to see you around the district very soon. Please contact me if you have questions about the federal government, legislation or other related issues. My door is always open, and you can call (202-225-4261) or email me on my website, www.wittman.house.gov.

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